

What ails these Bees?

THE following communication was received in a private letter from Dr. A. H. Bennett, Barrie:—

I have a question I would like answered if possible, and I do not know of anyone more capable than yourself.

I have a hive of beautiful Italian bees that did fairly well during the forepart of the season, but during the last six or eight weeks it would seem as though the old fellow himself had got amongst them. They came out in hundreds on the alighting-board and on the ground beside the hive and two, three, and even four bees will get at one and jerk and maul it around as though it was daubed or had insects on it, or even as though it were a robber, although they do not catch them by the legs so much as they would a robber, but they actually do sting a few to death and worry many more so that they die. They also seem to delight in catching a loaded bee when they alight on the board and worry and pull it around till they get all the pollen off its legs, and I fancy sometimes, make it disgorge its honey. Woe to the poor drone that walks out among them, as they make short work of him, never letting him go till they have mauled him to death. The queen is a splendid breeder, keeping the hive always full of brood and produces an exceedingly bright and beautiful three banded bee and there seems to be a lot of splendid workers among them, for in spite of their worry, I have taken over 50 lbs of surplus from them and they were in a very weak condition in the spring. Cool days they do not seem to be as bad, unless they perform inside, but warm days and nights they keep it up continually—scores and even hundreds on a very hot day, all at it at the same time. If you could tell me what is the matter with them and what I could do to cure them, I would be ever so much obliged.

Yours truly,

Barrie, Aug. 28th, 1891. A. H. BENNETT.

We do not know what can cause your bees to act in this strange manner. We have never had a case of the kind, but have often had the young bees fly out and play, roll over each other, and perform similarly to what you describe, and also driving out and killing off the drones. But why they would kill each other, when there were no robbers about, is a mystery to me. When robbers begin their work the robbed bees sometimes become so enraged at the robbers that they would attack their own bees sometimes in their excitement, when they would first light down. We think, however, there must be robbers about. Perhaps some of our friends have had a similar experience, and will be able to give us some light on the matter.

CAPPINGS.

CUT FROM A VARIETY OF COMBS

CONE-SHAPED SUPER-CLEARERS.

On the 8th instant I took a crate of sections off a hive, using a cone super-clearer, with very satisfactory results. The cone remained on the hive three hours during the afternoon, the weather being fine and sunny all the time. On removing the crate there were not more than six or seven bees left on the sections, which had been packed before. As I use excluder zinc above frames, the awkward effects resulting from the queen being in the super are minimized.—R. CLAY, Newcastle-on Tyne.

A QUEEN LAYING DRONE EGGS AFTER BEING CHILLED.

In June, 1890, I started a nucleus which was rather weak, but succeeded in rearing a fine Italian queen, and in August it was strong and running over with bees. Jan. 7, for some unaccountable reason, the queen-bees and all left their hive (a two-frame box $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. x 10 x 18 in. long) and clustering on the front of a hive close by. During the night we had a cold rain, or sleet; and when I discovered them in the morning they were more or less covered with ice. Supposing they were all dead, I brushed them off and found the queen, which, to all appearance, was chilled to death; but after holding her in my hands a short time she began to show signs of life, and in a few minutes was lively. During the same day, Jan. 7, I discovered a queenless colony which was very weak, and after laying the chilled bees in the sun awhile, most of them revived. I then put the queen and all into the weak colony. It being cold again until about the 20th I did not examine them until that time, and found quite a lot of eggs and some capped brood; but all had the appearance of drone brood. After that I examined them every warm day until March 25th, and found that nothing but drone eggs had been laid by the queen since she was placed in the hive. Was the cause of her laying all drone eggs the result of her being chilled?

R. J. ANDERSON.

Palouse City, Wash., July 17.

You are right friend A. The fact that freezing would injure a queen so that she would produce only drones was given by Baron von Berlepsch. You will find an account of his experiments in a little book called "The Dzierzon Theory."—Gleanings.

ONE FOR THE DOOLITTLE, QUEEN CELL CUPS.

Hip, hip, hurrah! We are having success with the Doolittle queen-cell cups. Nine-tenths of the artificial cups are now accepted by the bees, and built out into large handsome cells, without this plan we should be short, at this time of year, of cells for queen-rearing. If everybody has as good success as we are now having, it is going to be a great boon to beekeepers, from the fact that we can breed all, or almost all, queens from a choice mother, the best queen in the whole apiary, instead of a dozen or two as we were obliged to do by the old methods.—Gleanings.